

From: briand@zipcon.net@inetgw
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/19/01 2:00am
Subject: Microsoft/DOJ settlement

To whom it may concern,

I believe it is crucial that Microsoft be required to fully document :

1. The Application Programming Interface to any current or future operating system. More importantly, there must be some way to prevent other Microsoft software, e.g. Word, Excel, etc.. from using _undocumented_ API calls which give those programs an advantage.
2. Microsoft's true stranglehold is the use of proprietary datafile formats which make it exceedingly difficult for other vendors to write program which can interact with those formats. It is crucial that the file formats be documented and made publicly available. This still requires would be competitors to implement the functionality, a non-trivial task, but would allow competing programs to interact with Microsoft file formats.

The key to any settlement with Microsoft must include these items to make it possible for competing programs to evolve. All of the user applications will then compete on the basis of ease-of-use and stability and other important merits. The current situation, i.e. control of the file formats and API's, has in fact created an artificially limited resource. Microsoft _must_ document this information for internal use. It is hardly a difficult or expensive task to make these things public knowledge.

This sort of standardization is usually done by industry groups. Microsoft's monopoly position has allowed them to completely ignore this process and prevents such standards from being implemented.

Wherever standards exist and are publicly available, purchasers of materials covered by the standards benefit.

Sincerely,

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